

REMARKS

Claims 1-19 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 1 is amended. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

The courtesies extended to Applicants' representative by Examiner Heckenberg during the December 1, 2005 interview are gratefully appreciated. The reasons presented in the interview as warranting favorable action are incorporated into the remarks. Specifically, claim 1 is amended to comply with the Examiner's helpful suggestions made during the interview.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-17 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph. Because the Office Action did not reject claims 18 and 19, claims 18 and 19 are assumed to be patentable.

As agreed upon during the interview, the cancellation of the feature of "consisting essentially of" claim 1 renders the rejection of the claims moot.

Moreover, the recitation of a layer of chromium nitride formed over the electroless nickel layer is described in the specification at, for example, paragraph [0028]. In paragraph [0028], it is clearly recited that chromium nitride is applied on the electroless nickel layer. Accordingly, the specification provides adequate written description of this feature.

Furthermore, as also discussed during the interview, the layer of chromium nitride recited in claim 1 is a layer that could be applied via, for example, physical vapor deposition or flame spray, and also could have its thickness increased or decreased, as indicated in the specification at, for example, paragraphs [0034] and [0035]. Accordingly, the chromium nitride layer, as indicated in, for example, Fig. 5, is distinguishable over the layer of Beesabathina et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,409,813) because Beesabathina's layer is simply an

oxide matrix 30 that includes some oxide particles 40 (Figs. 1 and 2). As such, the chromium nitride particles in Beesabathina do not constitute a layer and could not be formed via a process such as physical vapor deposition or flame spray. Thus, the chromium nitride particles in Beesabathina do not correspond to the chromium nitride layer recited in independent claim 1. Accordingly, the above-described amendment to claim 1 distinguishes claim 1 and its dependent claims over the references applied in the June 17, 2005 Office Action.

Thus, because there is adequate written description for the recitation of "a layer of chromium nitride" in independent claim 1, independent claim 1, and its dependent claims, satisfy the written description requirement of 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph. Thus, withdrawal of the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-19 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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